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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Editor wishes to thank all those who have contributed, whether their work is published or not.

He owes a debt of gratitude in particular to the judges of the short story competition, Professor W. T. Williams, Mr. H. C. H. Mead and Mr. M. A. K. Pascoe; to B. L. H. Carpenter and Ian Carswell for much help in the preparatory stages; and finally, and above all, to his staff.



POETIC LICENCE

or NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD MYTH

'I have always averred', said the stranger, 'that Bellerophon was a fool.' He looked round upon the company, and drank deeply from his bowl of wine.

We were sitting in Aristides' tavern on the outskirts of Cos, enjoying a quiet drink in the shade, for it was a hot afternoon. The stranger was visiting Cos from the mainland. We'd all got to talking about Homer for some reason or other—I suppose that the Greeks never will get tired of discussing the father of Hellenic poetry. Although there aren't many nowadays who can swallow his mythology. The stranger apparently could, for he was discussing the story of Bellerophon with some heat.

'I say Bellerophon was a fool', he repeated. 'On what grounds do you base that statement, sir?' enquired old Dion, our local physician, who can always be relied on for a bit of sport. The stranger couldn't have seen the wink Dion gave the rest of us, or, if he did, he ignored it, for he continued, 'On the ground that he couldn't tell a mare from a stallion, or if he could, Homer got his story wrong, and all the other writers did, too.' He paused, and glared defiantly at us, especially at old Dion. 'Pray go on, sir,' said the latter, 'for I perceive that you have a story to tell.' 'Do you really want to hear it?' said the stranger, 'It's a bit embarrassing to me, since it concerns one of my ancestors, and the family has always tried to keep it dark. But if you're all interested . . . ' 'Do tell us', we said in chorus. 'I will,' he said, as if overcoming an initial reluctance. I must say he handled his audience very skilfully.

'It all happened many centuries ago', began the stranger, 'and the ancestor in question was my great-aunt twenty-seven times removed, Cēnone. You've doubtless heard of her namesake, the girl who loved Paris and was rejected by him for Helen. The family chroniclers, in order to avoid any confusion between the two, gave my great-aunt the additional name of Pegasis, because she happened to be born near the Pegai, or springs, of Ocean.' 'And what is *their* geographical position, sir?' piped up young Demos, a radical and sceptic who had made short work of Homer. 'That is something the chroniclers do not record', replied the stranger, looking fiercely at Demos, 'nor is it of great importance to my story. I will, therefore, not dwell upon it.'

'Cēnone was, it seems, a queer girl—very interested in Oriental studies. Her pet subject was the doctrine of Zoroaster, King of Bactria, who, as you probably all know, was a celebrated magician of those days. The Zoroastrians worshipped Spirit in the form of fire, and many of their magical practices were carried out with fire. It is stated in the chronicle that Cēnone's father warned her that she might burn her fingers if she continued her experiments in the occult, but whether he meant this literally or figuratively is not recorded.'

The stranger paused, and looked suggestively into his empty wine bowl. 'You must pardon my stopping,' he said, 'but, what with the heat and all this talk of fire, my tongue's as parched as the deserts of Libya.' I took the hint, and ordered more wine all round.

'One day,' continued the stranger, after he had irrigated his tongue, 'Cenone came across a tablet inscribed with Bactrian characters, which she deciphered as a magic formula for flying.' He saw our looks of incredulity, and repeated, 'For flying. You've all heard of Daedalus and Icarus, surely?' 'Yes, but we don't believe that old story,' said young Demos. 'It seems to me, my lad, that there's not much you do believe,' said the stranger, a trifle testily, 'but I won't argue about Daedalus for the present. Would you deny that it's possible for human beings to fly?' 'No-o,' said Demos hesitatingly, 'but . . . ' 'Oh, never mind about whether flying's impossible or not,' interrupted old Dion, who wanted to hear the rest of the story. 'Pray resume your narrative, sir.'

The stranger inclined his head with dignity, gulped down half a bowl of wine at a draught, and went on: 'The formula at once caught Cenone's imagination. She spent the next week in her laboratory, allowing no one to visit her but her trusted servant Phoebe: she took her food and the necessary materials for carrying out the experiment. When the family questioned her about what Cenone was up to, Phoebe replied that her mistress had sworn her to secrecy, but it was something to do with wings, and involved the use of large quantities of mercury, among other things. On the seventh day of Cenone's seclusion, there was a loud explosion in the laboratory. Phoebe and the family rushed to the building, and found it still intact, although full of smoke, and the floor was littered with broken apparatus. When the smoke cleared, there was no sign of Cenone, but standing by her furnace was a beautiful white horse, a mare.'

The story-teller paused, and turned to look into his wine-bowl, which was again empty by this time. I had, however, anticipated him, and another full one speedily appeared.

'Nobody had ever seen the mare before,' he went on, 'and Phoebe swore that it had not been there that morning, when she took her mistress's breakfast in. Of Cenone there was no trace, not even so much as a finger-nail. 'It rather looks to me,' her father said, 'as if Cenone has slipped up this time. She can't say I didn't warn her.' Hereupon the mare, who had been standing quietly by all the while, suddenly snorted in a very peculiar manner. 'Oh my poor mistress!' shrieked Phoebe, 'there you are: you've been metamorphosed!' And so she had. She couldn't talk, of course, with a horse's vocal organs, but she answered the questions the family put her by nodding or shaking her head. As far as they could gather, the experiment had gone wrong somewhere, just at the critical point, and instead of being able to fly, Cenone had suffered a change of organic state.'

Here young Demos guffawed loudly, but a concerted glare from the stranger and old Dion at once reduced him to silence.

'Well,' the narrator continued, 'they accepted the situation, and fixed Cenone up with a nice new stable well away from the other horses, particularly the stallions, because they didn't want any unfortunate complications to ensue, especially as they were hoping that Cenone would find out how to change herself back again. With the help of Phoebe, she set to and studied all the extant material on metamorphoses, but without finding anything useful.'

'A year had passed, and Cēnone was still as much a mare as ever, when one day a traveller asked for refreshment at the house. By a fortunate coincidence he happened to be a Bactrian, and by an even luckier one he knew a bit about magic, as Cēnone's father soon learned when they got into conversation. He told him all about Cēnone's unfortunate accident, and took him round to the stable to see her.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the impudent Demos, 'but I understood you to say earlier that your story concerned Bellerophon, and you haven't mentioned his name since.' 'Young man,' cried the stranger, 'I'll thank you to let me tell my story in my fashion. Bellerophon will appear in due time.' He looked so ferocious that I hastily called for more wine all round, and then whispered to old Dion that he might care to pay his turn, by way of a change.

Under the softening influence of fine old Chian, the stranger took up his tale once more. 'After the Bactrian had conferred for some time with Cēnone, her father and Phoebe, he asked to see the tablet bearing the disastrous formula. 'Alas,' lamented Phoebe, 'it was smashed in the explosion; there's only part of it left.' Cēnone, who had by this time evolved a system of communication with Phoebe by means of hoof-taps, explained with her assistance that she could remember the whole formula. 'The point is', said the Bactrian, 'that in order to undo a piece of magic such as this we must repeat all the processes in reverse order, and if we don't get them right, I won't answer for the consequences. Is it your wish that I attempt to restore the lady, sir?' he said to Cēnone's father. 'It's up to her,' replied the latter, 'if she's willing, I have no objection. People are beginning to talk—they don't believe the story we put about of her being on holiday in Egypt.' Phoebe translated a series of violent hoof-taps, from her mistress as, 'Cut the cackle and let's get on with the job,' or words to that effect. They accordingly repaired to the laboratory, which had been tidied-up and refitted.'

'Phoebe prepared a copy of the formula at Cēnone's dictation, and the Bactrian studied it. 'I can see where you went wrong last time,' he chuckled. 'I have observed from this fragment of the tablet that you mis-translated one of the key-words—for *dragon-feathers* you read *horse-hair*. I must admit that the writing's bad—these magical men do scribble! Now to work.' And they set to it: Cēnone, Phoebe and the Bactrian. Cēnone's father prudently retired from the laboratory just, he said, in case he got in the way and caused an accident.'

'The furnace roared, apparatus bubbled, and Phoebe ran back and forth with food, and ingredients for the spell, until the seventh day arrived. Cēnone's family, all agog, hurried to the laboratory, where they were met by Phoebe. 'You can't come in,' she said, 'We're at the crucial stage now.' Amid the noise of the furnace, the Bactrian cried, 'I expect projection at any moment!' He had scarcely uttered the words when there was quite a moderate bang! and a cloud of choking fumes billowed from the doorway. The Bactrian staggered out, spluttering, with his naturally dark complexion blackened by a thick coating of soot. 'Where's my daughter?'

cried Cēnone's father. There was a triumphant whinny, a swishing sound as of innumerable birds in flight, and a lovely white mare swept out of the building on great spreading pinions, high into the air, higher, higher, until she was lost to view in the immense azure vault of the sky.'

'I'm terribly sorry, sir,' said the rueful Bactrian, but I did warn you—'I'm afraid something went wrong again.' 'But where has she gone?' demanded the bereaved and bewildered parent. 'Your guess is as good as mine,' replied the other, 'I fancy she has flown off to visit the Fire-Gods.' Wherever she went, Cēnone never came back again.'

The stranger regarded his hearers with a complacent and somewhat alcoholic smile (which was not surprising, considering that he'd got through a good gallon of wine).

'And Bellerophon, sir?' I prompted mildly. 'Well, what of him?' replied the stranger, with a slight hiccup, 'Isn't it obvious? You all know the story about Bellerophon slaying the monster Chimaera with the aid of the winged horse Pegasus, which had supposedly sprung from the blood of Medusa the Gorgon, when Perseus cut her head off. The Poets say that Pallas sent Pegasus to Bellerophon as a favour, but when he attempted to fly up to heaven on him, Zeus sent an insect which stung the horse, who threw his rider to earth. Well, I ask you, gentlemen—what an involved fabric of distortion and fancy!'

'It's perfectly clear that there was no such animal as Pegasus: it was my aunt Pegasis, otherwise known as Cēnone. She obviously sportingly helped out Bellerophon, when he was in difficulties, but was pardonably annoyed when he tried to make her carry him to heaven, for, being a Zoroastrian, she was more interested in the other place.'

'If Bellerophon had possessed any sense, he'd have noticed that he was riding a mare, and all this Pegasus business wouldn't have arisen. But there, we all know how poets distort things, even Homer. It's poetic licence, I suppose. But I must be getting along. Good-day gentlemen: I am indebted to you for your hospitality.'

And pausing only to drain his wine-bowl to the lees, Cēnone's great-nephew twenty-seven times removed picked up his staff and bundle, bowed to each of us in turn, and marched with creditable steadiness into the afternoon sunlight.

D. BIGGINS

PEOPLE'S COURT

He did not know about the newspaper on the front-door mat. He went on eating his breakfast. The newspaper declared: 'Bronze Girl Case, Two Men Charged'; then, in a smaller column on the right: 'Stop Press, Mystery Girl Found.' He finished his cup of tea, then dressed and went to see whether there was any mail. Immediately he picked up the paper. There was his picture, staring white-faced and wild-eyed out of the page. The whiteness made his face look fat. It made him look forty odd.

He felt afraid now, especially when he saw his name in heavy type. '... pleaded guilty to the charge of obstructing the police and was remanded until this morning.'

There was a full column about the other man, the artist, the man accused of performing magic, of turning the missing woman into bronze: but there was no picture of him, no picture of his strong black bearded face.

A car came for him at ten o'clock. The men inside the car were kind enough. They supposed he had seen the paper this morning. Yes, he had. 'Don't suppose it'll make much difference to you though,' said one.

He walked, dramatically enough, up the stone steps into the Civic Hall: the ex-employee come for trial.

Inside the courtroom, at ten-thirty, most people were in their seats and eager for proceedings to begin. Counsel took their places. The prisoners, the ex-employee and the short man with a black beard, were brought into the dock; this was the second day of the trial, and because of the news that had spread through the town that morning, it looked like being the last. The door at the back of the courtroom opened and an usher came down the centre aisle followed by a well poised but rather frightened-looking young woman. Conversation ceased, and all heads turned. This was the woman of the hour. She took her place and concentrated on the one person who seemed not to have noticed her: a solemn attendant carefully carrying a small bronze statue of a girl dancing. He placed the statue in front of the judge's rostrum. Then the judge came in from behind a large chair, and when he had settled himself down, looking newly-shaved and a little watery about the eyes, the hearing began.

'The consequences of the sudden appearance of the chief victim of this strange case, are perhaps fairly obvious to most of us here. The chief accused is, it seems, innocent of the charges so far preferred, and will probably therefore have to be acquitted.' The bearded prisoner looked appreciatively at the judge. 'But before we go any further in that direction I would like to have a word with the young lady whose disappearance has caused us to prepare this case for trial.'

The young woman, neatly dressed in black, came down to the witness-stand.

'Are you Miss Rose?'

'I am.'

'Well, Miss Rose, where have you been?'

'I have been away, your honour.'

'You have indeed.' At this, there was laughter in the court.

'Now tell me, what have you been doing for the past month?'

'I have been in Spain, sir.'

'What have you been doing in Spain?'

'I've been on holiday with my sister.'

'Have you been in Spain all the time?'

'No sir, not all the time. I've been there for about ten days.'

'Miss Rose, you have presumably read about this case in the newspapers; and you should therefore know what we are trying to find out. Suppose you give us a fairly complete account of your movements?'

'Well, where shall I begin, your worship?'

'Ah yes. Look, Miss Rose, look across the courtroom, across to the dock there.—I think we will have the prisoners standing, if you please—now, tell me, do you recognise either of those two men?'

'I know the short one with the beard.'

'Can you tell us his name?'

'No.' A murmur ran round the court.

'Never mind. You say you know him—can you tell us how you met him?'

'Yes, I think so. It was about six months ago exactly. I had only been in this town a week. I remember I was going through the Civic Park on a Saturday afternoon, when this man, without any warning, suddenly rushed up to me and starting asking me if I'd ever done any modelling. I didn't know quite what he meant for the minute, or what was wrong.'

'He was excited?'

'He was ever so excited. He blurted out something about waiting all his life and this being it. I didn't know what to say.'

'What did you do in this embarrassing situation?'

'Well, it didn't go on much longer. He asked me to stop for a minute while he wrote down his address on a piece of paper. Then he put the paper in my coat pocket and told me to call on him the following afternoon.'

'What was your reaction to this?'

'I went.'

'You called on him the following afternoon?'

'Yes.'

'Wasn't that rather rash?'

'Not as it turned out. I thought for a while after he left me and I thought he must be an artist.'

'Had he not already told you so?'

'Not exactly, but I thought he must be from the way he behaved. But I must say I was surprised to come across an artist in this town.'

'What do you mean, Miss Rose?'

'Well, you don't believe in artists here, do you?'

The judge stared. 'My dear young lady, until this case came up we had not even heard of the word. Even now it has to be shown what the term means. Please tell us what happened when you visited this man's house.'

The short black-bearded man stared hard at the ceiling of the courtroom. The prisoner at his side stood easily now, holding the dock rail, and listening intently to the evidence. The girl described how the artist had placed her unclothed in various positions and how for hour upon hour, he had walked round and round her, sketching breathlessly with charcoal and pad, pausing, watching, flushed, always excited.

'Did he make any advances towards you?' asked the judge.

'Not at first.'

'Were you ever intimate?'

'Not for nearly ten days,' said the girl.

It soon became clear that, apart from the posing and sketching, nothing outside the court's normal comprehension had occurred. The bearded man was now addressed by the judge.

'Will you now tell us how the bronze figure was made?' There was a moment of silence. Everyone looked at the three feet high figure in the centre of the court.

'I made a model of the girl from clay—'

'On that first evening?'

'No, about a week later.'

'By the time you made the clay model, then, this girl had been missing for a whole week. And she was living with you all that time?'

'It was her choice, my lord.'

'You made the clay model by copying the drawings you had done, is that it?'

'That is it. Then I cast the thing in bronze.'

'And so you obtained her likeness. Is that what it means to be an artist, you copy things?'

'In a way, yes.'

'I see. Well, the popular contention, as you know, has been that you perpetrated this whole affair by some kind of magic. As this does not seem to have been so and as no harms seems to have resulted to any one, I have no alternative but to discharge you. There has been, shall we say, nothing extraordinary in the behaviour of Miss Rose,' the judge smiled. 'I must certainly congratulate you on the remarkable likeness you have achieved, it had us all completely hoaxed. Though, I must say, I don't see very much point in it.' The surfaces of the bronze girl shone in the morning sun that crept into the courtroom.

'I would now like to have a word with the other accused.' The judge stared across at the man whose offence was obstruction of the police. It had been this man's employment to make out the charge-sheets in the Police Headquarters Station; and when the artist was brought in on the previous day, this employee had suddenly, and ostentatiously destroyed the newly filled-up form, and had violently remonstrated with the officers in charge.

'I need not remind you,' said the judge 'that the seriousness of your offence and the consequent punishment cannot be in the least mitigated by the happy conclusion that the main part of this case has come to. You will realise now that your behaviour has been extremely foolish. Justice will take its course; and you have seen today an example of how justice will have its way.'

'My lord, with all respect, justice was not being done when this man was arrested.'

'That was not for you to decide. One would have hoped that you would have realised in nearly twenty years of service for a court of law that authority must be respected. Will you not admit now that what you did was very rash?'

'Yes, my lord, perhaps I will; but I did not think it rash at the time.'

'And you have sacrificed your job and your whole career for what is, after all, a mere bauble.'

The prisoner made no reply. He looked down at the bronze dancer, nerved, balanced and frail, shining in the sunlight.

'You will pay a fine of fifty pounds, with twenty pounds costs,' said the judge. 'And I shall ask the Director of the Civic Museum to accept the bronze statue as a souvenir of this case, and as a symbol of justice in this land. The case is now closed.'

ALFRED COLYER

THE MERCY CHILD

Sonny stood at the end of the lane watching the deep winter sun gradually dissolve over the frosted rim of the earth's surface. Then he turned towards the house, his arms full of late autumn leaves not yet soddened by the cold, wet nights. Autumn had been so late in coming that winter frost and fog had lapped round the trees before all their leaves had been shed, and so in this wooded part of England dim forms could be seen, after Guy Fawkes had been gloried in and forgotten again, gathering leaves and berries to furnish their homes for Christmas.

Sonny never minded wandering in the woods but he rebelled against doing so under compulsion. He loved to ramble idly, expecting and therefore finding delights at every turning. Today he had not been able to stalk the birds to listen to their songs and watch the trembling of their downy throats; he could not stop to follow the movements of retreating rabbits or the two grey squirrels: he had to search for crisp brown leaves still hanging on the trees, and select the choicest sprays of berried foliage from the bushes. Now he took them home and after supper his mother arranged the evergreen sprays in vases and prepared a strange sticky mixture with which she carefully varnished the autumnal branches and covered each delicate leaf. Sonny watched with interest, seeing the tender veins intensified as they appeared beneath their protective coat. They looked very lovely, but like hot-house plants or the strange things in shop windows which come from other countries far across the sea—they were even lovelier when they were in their rightful place, Sonny decided. Swaying on the great boughs of the trees each leaf had a glory far greater than now. Even if they were only to be kissed by the distant sun for one more day before the biting cold came choking round to sap the life from them they would be fine and glorious: they would have done their part. But here in this room, twined round picture-frames and the lamp-shade, they seemed like elderly ladies painted and dressed to resemble young girls.

"Why must Christmas be so artificial, Mummy?" Sonny wanted to ask. "Why must we bring into this strange atmosphere living things which would be happier in the clean, cold air? Why do we dig up Christmas trees and bring them to a heated, stifling atmosphere in order to garnish them with pieces of coloured paper and put them in boxes which cramp and kill their roots? Why don't we celebrate our Christmas in the open, among the living things? The Christ Child was born in a stable among living oxen and asses and near to a friendly countryside where shepherds watched their sheep. He came to live among the living, but we celebrate His birthday in a cold and unreal way. We stifle plants to make our houses seem like the world of nature; we kill fruits to make wine that we may drink; we kill birds that love to fly freely over the Christ Child's earth that we may eat, and we burn with fire logs of living trees and dark coal hewn from its place beneath the surface of the earth. Even there, where we cannot see, there is no peace. The need of men turn them into grave-snatchers of the past surfaces of the earth. Those leaves which now are trodden idly underfoot, and those trees which shadow people passing, cannot rest in peace: a sleep, and then, when compression has turned fluidity to a dark and solid mass, men will hew the secret places of the earth and bring back those leaves, those trees once more into the air of life, only to reduce

them to forlorn ashes. Men are merciless, at Christmas time even more than at any other time, towards the world of nature; and yet they are then celebrating, whether consciously or no, the birthday of the boy who came from the God of Mercy. Why are men so strange?"

All these things Sonny would have liked to say, but he was only a little boy and the thoughts tumbled through and around his brain as strange and incomprehensible feelings without forming themselves into words. He sighed quietly and sat by the fire gazing into the glowing ashes to search out the demon hands and castles which imaginative children always find among bright coals. It was so lovely to be swathed in warmth, and yet the cold, still night outside had a greater appeal for this little boy with idealistic dreams. When he had gone to bed and his mother had said goodnight to him, he ran across to the window and pulled back the curtains. There he stood, seaching the garden with penetrating eyes, searching each tree, which now, stiff with hoar frost, gave an impression of other-worldliness.

Each night Sonny would gaze this way, stealing a few moments of time to see that world so mysterious and full of awe to children; the world of night. Each night the trees were more clearly outlined against the dark sky as their leaves fell, one by one. The days no longer seemed a time of life to the nature world. As the fog muffled the hedgerows the robins hopped nearer to the world of men to seek the light no longer given by the silent sun and the sheltering warmth no longer to be found in nature's world. The heart of man's world became the shops. Day and night they were bright and full of friendliness, though their attractions were products of the lifeless life originating from men. Sonny wandered with his mother through a haze of garish lights and gaudy colours on Christmas Eve, staring at waxen dolls who haughtily returned his gaze. They were perfectly formed, but no gleam of life would ever enter those round blue eyes. "Which present did the Christ Child prize most greatly among those brought to his manger?" Sonny wondered. "Was it the gold, the crowns and jewels, the frankincense, the myrrh: or was it the little lamb which could snuggle close to the Baby and, ruffling Him with its soft fleece, shelter Him with the frail warmth of its own tender, living self. The jewels were cold: hard, unfriendly and meaningless as the clothes and soaps and fancy goods even the toys were to Sonny as he peeped over or under the glass counters to examine what his mother bought and all the many things she could not buy. And then they entered the world again . . . To others it would seem like going out of the bright world into a cold and unfriendly unknown, but Sonny enjoyed even the fog, whose soft darkness caressed where shop lights had stabbed.

As they left the main street and turned down towards the house snow began to fall, softly, silently but so swiftly that although the sky was clear and remote when Sonny peeped through his curtain that night yet the whole surface of the earth was changed. Snow ridged each branch of every tree and the whole garden seemed to be stretching upwards, a host of white-tipped fingers striving to clutch the stars. The fence at the end of the garden which divided cultivated land from woodland had become a solid wall of white within which everything seemed cold and phantasmal. Sonny suddenly wondered if he were imprisoned, shut in for ever. He looked round his room; saw the branch of holly over his mantelpiece, saw the

stocking, limp and empty, drooping over the end of his bed. Then he saw his little boots. Lying in the corner, they had been hidden by the shadows, but a chance flare in their direction from the Christmas log burning in the grate fired Sonny's brain with rapid thoughts. He started to dress, becoming more and more thrilled with anxiety every moment. He must go and see if the wood was still a kind place, a welcoming haven, or whether the wall of the white had immured him from it for ever. A shaft of light fell on him as he passed his mother's door. Didn't she feel shut in and frightened, too? Sonny nearly ran to greet her, but realised as the sound of soft singing came from the room that she did not sense any danger and that if he were to go to her he might be ordered back to bed. So the little figure, muffled in warm clothing, crept on silently. The back door was not locked, and soon Sonny was shuffling tracks into the soft white covering over the lawn. The gate at the end of the garden usually moaned and complained when it was opened, but this night, when everything was so still and unbreathing, white softness muffled the hinges.

Sonny stepped into the wood, and a drop of snow fell from a nearby twig onto the child's neck and quickly melted. He shivered and blinked his eyes more widely open. He no longer felt muffled or drowsy. Here, as he strode manfully along the well-worn track, leaving enough space between his footprints for a robin to tread, he was very much a living thing. But now there were no rabbits, no movements from the two grey squirrels who usually wandered so near to Sonny's house; no bird even. Was it the winter or the night, the darkness or the cold, which kept them so silent? Up in the cold clear sky hung many other planets. Away and away from the earth and yet so near to the gaze of this dreamy child who saw the twinkling points of each sphere pierce the invisible atmosphere about them time and time again. Now the sight of the stars was framed against the dark pine trees whose snow-laden branches leant heavily against the sky. At every step those branches became closer, inter-twining and shutting out the crystal light . . .

Sonny fell, caught in a drift of white which swept close and deeply in the hollow as the trees drew closer overhead. This was the heart of the wood. A deep hollow where the silence pounded heavily against the human ear even in summer. Now in the deep coldness of winter night, when darkness shadowed the trees more heavily than did their foliage in summer, the effect was frightening. Sonny knew now that the wood was alive after all, but here it seemed that the wood itself was a living being, not the place where various small forms of life dwelt. Sonny was a man-child, a child of man, and man seemed suddenly helpless against the force of this vast wilderness of nature. Gone was the child's resentment of man's cruelty to nature, gone even his love of that nature in panic, sudden panic for a desperate urge for life. Away through the trees a big bright star was hanging—perhaps the Bethlehem star. God would take care of the birds and beasts but man must seek for himself . . . 'Mummy! I want Mummy . . '

As the cry rang out through the stillness and the little feet pattered hard and heavily towards home the wood dwindled and sighed. A last leaf dropped to the earth, to be crushed and killed by the oncoming tread.

J. M. LAWLER

REPORT OF THE SHORT STORY COMPETITION

When considering the stories submitted to them the judges took note, not only of the actual merits of the entry before them, but of evidence of the writer's future ability. All the stories entered bore the marks of inexperience.

In awarding the first prize, the judges were unanimous. The 'story within a story' form is always dangerous, although Conrad used it successfully, because the reader is constantly reminded that it is only a story. The 'urbane narrator' is a danger too: in this case he has resulted in bibulous asides that are rather overdone. The ending is, perhaps, a little weak. Nevertheless, the writing is controlled, the idea is fresh, and the story succeeds in its intention, which is to amuse. The writer deserves his success.

Although the judges could not agree as to whether 'People's Court' deserved second or third place, they did all agree that this story ought to be placed in the first three. It was because of this agreement that the story was awarded second prize. This story has a message which is not very new and is sometimes pushed a little too obviously. The beginning is a little slow. Perhaps the story does not quite come off, but it has the virtues of restraint (except as already noted) and of logical form. One is interested, and wishes to read to the end. The dialogue is, on the whole, well handled.

The award of third place to 'The Mercy Child' is likely to arouse a good deal of criticism. There were three stories, each of which received qualified support from the judges, and no agreement could be reached on any one of these except as explained below. These stories were 'The Mercy Child,' 'Situation—a Day to Die In' and 'The Camp.'

'The Camp' has certain obvious faults. One does not know how much of the knowledge of Russia is at first hand; but one suspects that the knowledge of concentration camps is not the result of experience. Neither medium nor emotion is under control. The dialogue is unreal: form is spoilt by long 'flashbacks,' things that are usually fatal to short stories, except in the hands of a master (who would usually avoid them). Here is an inexperienced writer, attempting something that is beyond his 'range.' Nevertheless, the writing has an effective visual quality that seems to give promise for the future. It is a thoroughly bad story, but it has some artistic truth.

One judge would have given 'Situation—A Day to Die In' second place. There are lapses, but generally speaking the writing is good, and under control. A state of mind is sometimes over-explained rather clumsily; but the story is a serious artistic attempt. It was felt, however, that the matter of the story was never really worked out in the author's mind, and that for this reason it lacks conviction. A story of this nature fails entirely if it does not convince. The writer has ability: one would like to see it used on a theme in which he or she really believes.

'The Mercy Child' has faults for all to see; its virtues have to be looked for, but are none the less real. There is considerable lack of control; there is sentimentality and a tendency to preach. In trying to formulate such complicated thoughts for a child, the author obtrudes herself, thus taking upon herself the child's childishness. But the author does see, and she makes her readers see, too. There is a genuine idea, and it is worked out truthfully. If there is gross over-writing, yet there are instances of effective imagery. On these points the judges were agreed, and they therefore awarded the story a place. One judge felt that the award ought to be made, but that the story ought not to be published; because the writer, when she has more experience, may blush to see it in print.

In conclusion, all the writers must learn to cut ruthlessly; several, including the winner, ought to learn how to paragraph dialogue. Eight stories were entered.

'THE PRESENT LIKE A NOTE OF MUSIC...'

We believed in a world of swishing taffeta
Net, silk and black bow-ties,
Helped by sophisticated syncopation
And well-groomed orchestral arrangement,
Or numbed, beyond reason, by a different note,
Pot-shot kettle-drum, washing-board,
Topped by devious brassiness,
And the beer-stained attack of the piano.

We were part of that make-believe existence,
Making our own nonsensical patterns
Across the floor—part of the changing prism
Swirling, twirling to the orderly drum-beat
And the sexual urge of the saxophone,
And six hours were less than a minute,
No more than a corner-of-the-eye impression,
A picture quickly dissipated in a mist of memory.

We returned to the hard, clear lines of fact,
To the men in zute-suits and street-standing floozies,
To high prices, to cruising taxis and the roar
Of the last late-night 'buses, to the street-lamps
Hardening the outlines of the trees into dye-green,
To the solidity of Victorian suburbia,
And we paused, recalling that moment, seeking no adjustment,
Of those worlds, content in our own sphere.

M. D. W. GOWERS

SCHERZO FOR AN AMERICAN SALESMAN

Cin-Cin-Cincinnati—this is a comfortable chair—a bank and shoal of Time. Ostensibly I am reading this magazine—turning the pages slowly, casually and nonchalantly. In actual fact I am, as usual, looking for something but it will not be among these pages. Where is it? What is it—who has it? Who has the magic wand to give me this thing I am looking for?

My dark blue well-creased slacks and shiny black shoes extend before me while over goes another page—nonchalantly.

Rather tired—high pressure today . . . Good hotel this—one of the best here. Good move checking in here. Sumptuous security. Air of well-being. Wealth, ease, comfort. Twentieth century U.S.A. in luxurious blues and blacks—the lighting helps. Oleaginous cordiality moving unctuously over thick carpets—power. Murmur of talk. More salesmen. Won't know them—not my usual area—could be, though. 'Main Street extends from the Atlantic into the Pacific and is bordered by the Lakes to the North and the Gulf to the South.' Mass-produced sameness for thousands of miles—the same stores, the same names, the same goods—all in the almighty catalogue, the eternal best seller, the real bible of America—the same faces, immobile and emotionless, well preserved by steam heating, pudgy and doughlike from the sickly-sweet diet of the drug store . . . the banded cigar protruding high from lips sniggling over a quarter's worth of lust—the cigar . . . symbol of emancipation. The tawdry tinsel of dusty Main Street, foundation of a nation's culmination in stagnation! Cin-Cin-Cincinnati, San Francisco or Miami . . . Has *She* got it?

She sits and arranges herself in the centre of that divan contraption just opposite me. Well dressed—shapely. Good legs slanting close. Must not stare. Another page . . . Withdraw and pull up feet, readjust and casually cross legs in attitude of relaxed assurance . . . yes—her eyes glance, flickering . . . Did her eyes glance? Tension, mutual awareness, grows, mounting suddenly as stomach contorts and hot rising in chest and throat while heart jumps—telepathy . . . Is it mutual? Must be . . .

Where is that music coming from? The restaurant? Food later . . . Seat for one. Just one place. . . Table for two . . . two . . . This way sir. Music. Music. Music. Soothing away the pain, the anguish, the sterility, the loneliness. Has *She* got it? Music, musicians—artists. Different kinds of artists . . . Some use oils . . . capture the inner essence through its outer aspects—good. Great, some of them . . . Some use words—the presumptuous ones, these. Except those who approach music—they call these the poets. Composers of great music are really the inarticulate ones. Use sounds not words. As the greatest things cannot be spoken about, put into words, perhaps these the greatest artists . . . even Wolfe apoplectic sometimes—choked with words. 'Went mad on behalf of sanity . . . ' Only one musician ever articulate with words as well as sounds—Shakespeare. Hamlet in neon lights billed as the boudoir spy . . . Shakespeare. Great accident for which we must be duly thankful. Humbly and duly thankful. Shakespeare—Man of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow . . .

Tomorrow. Tomorrow. The next movement. Symphony of Life. Stravinsky. Pounding. Smashing—Get Out and Sell! Sell! Put a zip in it! Each contributes to overall efficiency—the graphs must climb. Pounding. Smashing. The foot hard on brake as green and amber to red. Whistles—

the crowds swarm, pounding, smashing the concrete between walls of yellow, the dust-spuming wheels and feet—the dust churned sterile concrete. Heat and glare on sidewalk. The Concrete Jungle . . . People. People. People. Compete or Perish. Love thy neighbor as thyself. H'mm . . . good, that . . .

Must not stare. Have been staring—has She seen? Eyes flicker, glancing—meet! Tingle! Shock! Squirm—look away . . . eyes, eyes deep blue, pensive. Or Quizzical? Mocking? Or Inviting? Undoes jacket, is relaxing. Crosses legs. Silken sheen. Would describe legs as positive . . . silken legs . . . legs positive. Eyes definitely flicker now. To see effect . . . Effect considerable. She, too, looks at magazine. Ostensibly she is looking at it—is *She*, also, looking for something? Can't just walk over—Good Evening, Madame. I think we have something we are looking for. Will you dine with me? Thrown out—mad man. Conventions 'Walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage' . . . forget the rest.

Tomorrow. Smile, smile, smile, at all costs—Smile! 'The show must go on!' Clap hands here comes Charley . . . clap backs, take arms, attitude of cordiality. 'The false cordiality of Babbitt!' Talk. Talk. Anecdotes. Puerile filth. Agony and sterility never ending—the slow-crawling clock—how much longer? Smile—talk—the graphs! Placate the Lords of the Jungle! Help them to make their kills and drag their booty, like merchant lords of Carthage, to their country estates . . . in pink and black Cadillacs to white-fenced horse farms shimmering in the Blue Grass, smilingly innocent, respectable, masks for murder, robbery and rape in the Jungle . . . plunder from vice-ridden, dope ridden, lust-ridden slums of Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Louis and New York Nashville Atlantis, Tampa and Mobile . . . the marble and mink in Washington . . . Cin-Cin-Cincinnati—just the same a thousand miles away . . .

Just to find it and escape—sunshine, palm-fringed shores and rhythm of foaming surf, blue and white beneath blue and white, *rallentando* to oblivion and peace . . . Would *She* come? The voluptuous tension of a taut bow-string—loaded, the arrow to shoot, curving high to tumbling clouds under moon, palms . . . pillows . . . curving beach like soft sheets . . . taut . . . the excitement of a tropical night . . . the soft warmth like the soft warmth of a lovely woman, music rhythm, merging with the pounding surf, drum-taut threads of feeling strummed in a Rhapsody encroaching and enveloping in waves of intimacy, fondly advancing, fondly caressing, nuzzling, withdrawing, tantalizing . . . advancing . . . long fingers of foam jetting over white soft curve of beach, withdrawing, advancing to beatific fulfilment, soporific oblivion . . . The noisy pregnant silence of a tropical night. Perhaps she will . . . Table for two, glasses, wine bubbling away into ecstasy, soft voices, soft laughter, the moon-splashed mountains of Mexico beyond the windows, through the soft haze of golden lighting—beaded curtains beneath spinning fans. Intimate, warm friendly stillness in the midst of movement. Other peoples, other languages—impersonal, not encroaching. Two, together. Not alone. Together—life positive, with meaning and significance, an object, co-ordination, odds halved, positive not negative, not lonely. The real independence is the independence of two not of one . . .

Have been staring again . . . turn another page. What to do? She is raising eyes—we meet! Ecstasy—I question! Pause and ecstasy and suspense! She lowers eyes—turns another page . . . Contact established—eyes warm but puzzling. Perhaps?

Now, why is that bloated Oaf wanting to sit *there*? She moves along. Both of us—we feel disturbed, hostile . . . Or, perhaps, only *I* am hostile—here is competition. One should welcome competition . . .

She is very attractive. I should like to sit in that dark mysterious enchanted room there and touch hands, glasses, one, two, three cocktails . . . food later . . . Two sir? I should like to . . . Action now called for . . . slowly another page. Time passes. Time Marches on . . . The *real* thing. Where is the *real* thing? Who has the magic wand? *She*? This time, perhaps?

Did well today—eloquent, persuasive, confident, assured—the friendly graphs will go up and up behind the sleek desks over which will pass the fat cigar from fat fingers with a fat smile as the wallet fattens . . . Not always like that, though. Stupid life, stupid Symphony, stupid smashing and pounding. Release in war once.

She takes out cigarette. He offers light—Oaf! Oaf me, too! Get out and Sell! Put a zip in it! She smiles, exhales blue smoke and eyes glance here. I tingle, pulse quickening—my turn to move! What to do? Decisive action now required. Fat Oaf must be preparing likewise . . . a triangle, threads of feeling interweaving.

Another page—slowly and nonchalantly .

She has an excellent figure . . . softly curving, bordering on voluptuous but vital. Sensuous but with element of strength and character—Ah! I have it! She is putting aside her magazine . . .

I rise, before I petrify in indecision . . . I force myself forward—blindly almost, as if over cliff—heart pounding, smashing . . . 'I beg your pardon but if you have finished with this may I take it?'

What, what, what will she say? How react? She offers magazine, smiling, looking at me, direct—our eyes meet, probe 'Certainly, I have quite finished—to tell the truth I was only glancing at it for something to do!' Calm but thrill-conveying vibrant voice . . . ecstasy—possibly Eureka—My eyes gleam in triumph as they meet those of Fat Oaf, watching. I look at her, we smile and I return to bank and shoal while Fat Oaf takes hint—must take obvious hint . . . cannot operate under eyes and nose of Fat Oaf . . . the Devil incarnate—protuberant stomach, symbol of success . . . the statistics say we are a nation of diabetics, rimless spectacles and bald heads at twenty-five . . . worshippers of the Stomach—Canaan into a pig-sty! No soul, no beauty, only standardised worshippers of the fat stomach on the altar of the automobile. Fat Oaf must go—must not triumph . . .

Cannot be long now . . . Hallo! Hallo! What is this? Tall, Thin and Distinguished comes up to her—she rises smiling . . . she turns to collect bag, gloves . . . For brief poignant moment her eyes sweep mine in last glance—tell all, tell nothing. They turn . . . he holds her arm close high up, beneath arm-pit intimately, possessively . . . they look at each other, he talking, smiling . . . they thread through foyer over thick carpets to swing doors in distance . . . sensuous grace . . . seams perfectly straight . . .

She is walking away from me . . . feline grace . . . she is going, going . . . I watch her departing figure. Now She has gone.

Fat Oaf is looking over at me—but I am sitting here reading this magazine . . . turning the pages slowly—and nonchalantly . . . nonchalantly.

DESMOND TARRANT

STRETHER

Now as the deck moves disconcertingly
beneath my feet, as arm is straightened
by the hand-gripped rail, and head is full
of sound of moon-flecked sea,
this Atlantic marks the most that I achieved.
No longer will I share the nights
when mind was soothed by vision
of a world in black and white,
unerring hand (O snow white hand, heart's beacon!)
recalled a straying thought towards the light
—the passage purged, the magazine replanned.
Neither will the sun-clad days,
when mind relaxed, regained a view of world
which one in truth had lost in antique shop, return,
when heart, so long confined, grew large,
saw white in black, and black in white
and did not care, rejoiced in what it had
—the yellow books replaced upon the shelf,
the playing thoughts uncramped in Madame's room
dilated by the presence of the past.
And yet I'd gladly suffer loss of both,
if he, for whom I came, had learned,
had not replied with enigmatic smile
to plea that this was life too precious to be lost,
—insinuating, either that the sun was not for him,
or moral night could not subdue
the splendour that he felt.
For if I knew that he would not return
I'd throw, at once, my wasted years in bin,
defy the outraged cries of those who saw me straight
(New England watchdog of the public weal)
and live the rest of life content,
heart warmed by pictures of a tiny inn,
a parasole, a sun-lit boulevard,
and one who had what I myself had lost.
But now a double dream is dead.
Between the Paris glow and Woollet glare
the restless waves re-echo
echo in my restless heart.
I make no crossing or return,
and endless sail upon an endless sea.

P. A. W. HARRINGTON.

PROBLEMS OF THE GERMAN POST-WAR NOVEL

This article does not attempt to give a survey of the German post-war novel. It merely deals with a number of problems that arise directly or indirectly from the war-time and post-war experience of the German people and shows the solutions which the writers have found—or at least believe to have found to these problems. For this reason we had to exclude two works which are probably regarded abroad as the most representative ones of German post-war literature: Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus* and Hermann Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*. The former, though having direct bearing on the problems which are of interest to us, was written in the States and has met with severe criticism in Germany where it is felt that Mann has not done justice to his former father-land. The latter written in the ivory tower of Hesse's Swiss home is an utopia and repeats Hesse's idea that times of chaos must periodically occur if life is to persist.

The first great German post-war novel came from the eastern zone; it was Hermann Kassack's *Die Stradt jenseits des Stroms* (*The Town Beyond the River*). The book, of which so far as is known to me no English translation has appeared as yet, is by no means representative of the general trend followed by the writers of the Eastern Zone. It comes from Frans Kafka and has many affinities also with French surrealism. The Town beyond the River, that is the zone of which Cocteau speaks at the beginning of his film *Orphée*, the 'no man's land, the land between life and death whose inhabitants are no longer alive, but also not quite dead, for the memory of their former human existence has not yet faded away.' We remember the Orphée's question in the film: 'Quels sont ces gens qui rodent? Vivent-ils?' And Hortebise's reply: 'Ils le croient. Rien n'est plus tenace que la déformation professionnelle.'

In laying the scene of his novel in this no man's land Kassack succeeds in showing the true character of all human activity: a constant alternation between creation and destruction. There is neither progress nor development. There is but the law of transformation, 'transformation from one state into another, from something solid into something liquid, from something liquid into something solid, from joy into sorrow, from sorrow into joy, from stone into dust and from dust into stone, from matter into spirit and from spirit into matter. Death becomes transformed into life and life into death.' This *vanitas vanitatum*, this futility of all earthly activity and striving, is clearly reflected in the industries of this town of shadows. The stone factory at one end of the town turns dust into stone so that a second factory at the other end may turn this same stone again into dust. What happens there is but the 'mechanical equation for the eternal process of circulation, that process of circulation to which are subject atoms as well as planets and also that mongrel man.'

In the course of its historical development the European continent has strayed from its right path in two ways. On the one hand it has developed a dualistic conception of the world instead of the original idea of spiritual unity. Thus body was opposed to spirit, man to nature, God to His

creation and life to death. On the other hand the logos, the spirit, was replaced by the dead and the energies were directed at the outer-world, thus changing life into an endless series of wars notwithstanding the fact that 'all will of conquest carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction and that all wars of aggression have ultimately led to thousands and thousands of people being slaughtered for no purpose.' What happened in the XIXth century was the 'irresistible liquidation of the idea of the West, the natural destruction was but the outward confirmation of the inner bankruptcy, of a spiritual, moral and religious bankruptcy' and the catastrophe of 1945 seems to the author but the last link in this chain.

Europe is ripe to return to the Asiatic continent from which it had once broken loose. 'The self-annihilation, the harakiri which Europe committed in the 20th century of the Christian era meant . . . nothing else but the preparation for the Asiatic continent to fetch back that strip of land which had for a while made itself independent.' By this return the author understands above all a rebirth out of the spirit of China, Tibet and India, a return to a contemplative attitude towards life. The spirit is to be rehabilitated, for it is the spirit, and the spirit alone which matters. It is the thought, not the deed that counts. Human life is valuable not by the acts it performs, but by what it contributes to the spirit. Hence from the beginning the emphasis on the fact that 'Nature is spirit and spirit is nature.' Yet even the amount of spiritual substance is fixed in nature. 'The great store of ideas can neither increase nor decrease. Alone the forms which they assume vary and the intensity with which the rebirth of thought is accomplished.'

With the return to a contemplative attitude the whole meaning of life is changed. At the end of the first world war Thomas Mann had warned the hero of his *Magic Mountain* not to let Death get the upper hand over Life. Now Kassack again reverses this attitude. To him all Life is dominated by Death. In the conversation between Robert, the hero of the novel, and the doctor we find the following interesting passage: 'Now I would be a better doctor—he (the doctor) said aloud—after discovering Hippocrates' secret. And what does that secret consist in—asked the chronicler (Robert). Death is the law of life—replied the doctor.' Robert himself summarizes his experiences in no man's land in the following words: 'I have learnt . . . that Death is the measure of all things.' Life must be lived in reference to Death, such is the ultimate conclusion at which Kassack arrives, and seen in this light the individual loses much of his importance. He becomes capable of letting his 'own importance be swallowed up by the general fate.'

The transplantation of the conditions of human life into a world of shadows had enabled Kassack to show up the futility of all human activities. Gerd Gaiser in his *Eine Stimme Zieht an* (*A Voice is Raised*) achieves a similar effect by a perfectly realistic representation of German life as it was during the time that preceded the currency reform. As a result of the war all standards, ethical and otherwise, had broken down and people having lost their moral support wandered in circles like the ants of which Anhang speaks in the book. These ants having lost the spoor of their vanguard began to turn round and round until the whole seemed one living mill.

'During the following night this whirlpool dissolved into two groups spinning mechanically round and round. In the morning the whole army was dying, but a few survivors were still spinning round spasmodically, without stopping.'

The havoc of the war years has been such that man's will-power has been paralysed. 'Look round, everybody is ill and mad with hunger. People do not quite know it themselves. But they are ill and mad. Where should they take will-power from.' Such is the position of the German people during those first years after the general surrender.

A man released from a prisoner of war camp returns to a little town where he had once gone to school, and he again meets the people he had once known. They seem sadly changed. They have lost what they had cherished. Frau Waaga is waiting for her husband to return who is languishing behind the barbed wire of a prison camp, Ness Kämmerer has lost her fiancé in the war, René Burgstaller knows her father to be imprisoned as a Nazi and her brother has turned highwayman. Michael Anhag misses the friends he has lost like a piece of clothing. 'He had finished with the past and he had finished with the future. And the past was to him like a burden and future lay before him stale like some stale bread.' Life seems to have nothing to offer any more. Everything is turned topsy-turvy. 'Formerly people had a goal in front of them. That was self-understood' we read in the book. 'All one had to do was to work one's way towards it. The trouble to-day is to find a goal. Once we see it before us the worst is over.' In the end the hero who is refused asylum in the town decides to return to his wife whom he had once left. 'We seem to have forgotten what order is or to have destroyed it, so let us cling at least to what little there is left of it.' Such is the explanation the hero himself gives of his final step.

The book is an appalling document of the absolute chaos which followed upon the surrender of 1945, and which swept all moral standards aside, ending in the debasement of human life itself. The last taboo has been broken, man has ceased to be the measure of all things. There is a good deal of cruelty in the book, which is the natural outcome of the fact that man has delivered himself into the hands of the beast within him. A child is run over by a car and his body dumped into a ditch as if it were that of a cat. A band attempts—though unsuccessfully—to steal a valuable drug and cold-bloodedly murder the man who handed them the wrong box. All the typical phenomena of complete demoralisation are introduced. Death herself, whom Kassack's book had placed above life, has here been degraded. Man has ceased to look upon her as something great. Too many had died or were dying at that time. It has become something mechanical, like everything else. 'How busy the parsons are kept, I saw myself in the capital at a burial last week—says one of the characters of the book—there they buried three within a time of thirty minutes, and outside the cemetery there were others waiting.' And a little later in connection with the funeral services. 'That is all printed beforehand, only the name has to be added and the dates, that fits for all cases. Born and died, that fits always and for each one of us.'

Yet it cannot be said that man is bad. The general misery has created a new kind of solidarity between them. The social barriers have fallen.

'But the people were tolerant to each other and cautious as in a hospital. They helped one another getting in and out (in the trains), handed one another the suitcases and alternated in standing and sitting. And when the train stopped they asked whether the other had a place to stay overnight. When someone unpacked his provisions he would ask: Are you hungry, have you anything to eat?' People are even capable of self sacrifice. Thus Anhag sacrifices himself in order to save the drugs although his sacrifice is in vain, for the drugs will never be needed and his own death is soon forgotten. There is the hero himself who is the first to raise his voice in an attempt to arouse people from their apathy and who is therefore liked by children and women alike.

Altogether the book is not without a ray of hope. It is true the author is not without misgivings as to what lies in store for his people. He is clearly afraid of the return to the former way of life. 'The middle class re-established in their position, wasting the after dinner hour with their apathetic brain and their stuffed nostrils, stirring themselves to life with poisonous drugs because their spirit does not rouse them from their apathy, filled and satiated and yet restless because of someone else who has got further than they and will still get further.' No hope there. If there is hope it lies with the children who 'live below and above history who suffered from poverty, renunciation and duties imposed on them at an early age, but whose world remained unimpaired. . . ' They still go on playing the same games that children had played hundreds of years before, they remembered their mysterious rules and the strange words of old songs long forgotten by the grown-ups. The children thus become the symbol of Nature which constantly renews itself and will always be triumphant over death.

Although he does not envisage a world without God, Gaiser seems doubtful as to the relationship between him and His creation. Three conceptions stand side by side: that of the stranger who had assumed the part of the parson in the village and for whom the blame lies with man not with God. 'God and play are two things, and gain and loss do not let us guess for whom or against whom any one has been playing.' In fact his attitude implies that while God's ways are hidden from us all that happens is for our best. The good may come to us—as the author points out in another passage—from the district nurse or the neighbour. 'But what does it matter. In the end it all goes back to God.' However, this attitude is curiously opposed by two other passages which appear towards the end of the novel. In the one the author speaks of a boy who explains that God is invisible because 'He is ashamed' of His creation. The other speaks of the beast in man and states expressly that 'God knew why He permitted it, He did not hide His face and did not turn away.'

Even more sceptical seems the attitude taken up by Stefan Andres in his novel *Ritter der Gerechtigkeit* (*Knight of Justice*). Strictly speaking this novel falls outside the scope of this article since the scene is laid not in Germany but in Italy. Yet it is obvious that Italy was merely chosen because the author found himself there on neutral ground, and it can safely be assumed that the criticisms voiced against the state of affairs in Italy apply to Germany as well.

Three characters are placed in the centre of the book: the Prince, Dino, his nephew, and Fabio. Each of them represents a different solution to the problem. The most radical is that of the Prince who recognizes that he had hitherto been one of the many who 'only proclaim a truth instead of proving it.' When his palace is destroyed in an air attack he explains this event not as an act of nonsensical destruction but as a means of freeing himself from the possession of his treasures. He descends into the depth to suffer with the common people and thus saves himself from the hypocrisy of his class. 'Sense and nonsense had got so entangled, . . . vulgarity and greatness, lie and truth.' Dino represents the opposite extreme. Dino is a realist, he seeks the reform of the real world. He wants to assert his own self. 'I want to live and not to live like a dog trained by civilisation' for civilisation to him means 'connections in high places and hypocrisy.' He wants to be like a rapacious bird, for the world is beyond help. The evil lies in man and increases with each new generation. But in isolating himself from his fellow men he becomes a prey of his own licentiousness and must perish. Fabio is equally remote from the religiosity of the Prince and the anarchism of Dino. But he ultimately remains a spectator who stands outside life. He has nothing positive to oppose to the general decay.

This decay is the result of two factors: the war and corruption. War means murder, slaughter of men, women and children. 'The death of these innocent people was incomprehensible in every respect' and 'reason refused to understand this process, imagination to measure it.' If war leads to a weakening of the moral laws, corruption, the other evil, results in the invalidation of human justice. A state that does not respect its own laws is condemned, for as a result the feeling for right and wrong is killed in the individual. But since state and society are identical the root of all evil lies with society itself. ' . . . for it seems almost impossible completely to deny war without denying society, which engenders war as a result of its own character.'

Thus Andres becomes a critic of society which he opposes to the people as such. Society, so he maintains, always remains international however nationalistic it may behave. Its members carefully weigh the pro and contra and always find themselves on the right side. They may be fascist or nazi one day and side with the allies the next, just as it suits their aims and purposes. Hence Uncle Giorgio's rather scathing remark that 'the American gangsters in uniform and the Neapolitans in civilian clothes worked so well hand in glove that it needed no rehearsal.' Altogether the Allies do not come off too well and the author can speak but sarcastically of 'the joyful freedoms with which the Allies had given the world at one go and gratis all that it had been waiting for so long.'

While the well-to-do continue to flourish the poor starve. Assunta, the waiting woman, complains: 'The rich are stronger than God, so my deceased father used to say, God retired to Heaven and left us the money as our redeemer.' There is no hope of an improvement unless those who 'have petrol pumps, party-books, etc., instead of a heart' begin to feel sorrow, sorrow because of their desecrated, humiliated and empty lives.' Till then there remains but resignation, suffering, life in misery, imprisonment and death in hospital. Assunta says to Fabio: 'Signorino, those who are poor must pay for our sins, that was always so, and will never change. All we can do is to resign ourselves, otherwise we shall be put

into prison and that would be worse.' The truly great and noble character has no choice but to lose himself in the crowd. Only thus can he be prevented from a sinning against his fellow man and the respect for our fellow-men is the foundation of all life. 'You adore God as you say'—Fabio remarks to Constanze. 'But I tell you, Constanze, if you no longer find God in a human being outside yourself, God dies within you.'

A religious approach to the post-war problems is found in Elisabeth Langgässer's *Märkische Argonautenfahrt*. Elisabeth Langgässer, a devout Catholic of half Jewish extraction, combines religious fervour with a very strong intellect. The combination of the two results in a love for excessive speculation which renders her work often abstruse and difficult to understand. In the case of *Märkische Argonautenfahrt* the interpretation becomes still further confused by the fact that the book is split into two parts: the story of the pilgrimage to Anastasiendorf and the episode of the two young children, who fall in with a band of blackmarketeers, which is only loosely connected with the first part and shows also a marked difference in style. The episode, the less complicated part of the book—reveals the misery of refugee children and the grave dangers to which they are exposed. Helmuth and his sister have come to Berlin with their grandmother who dies. The only two ways open to them are the orphanage and the road of adventure. Helmuth chooses the latter and falls in with a Yugoslav blackmarketeer who is homosexual. Kurella, a refugee priest saves the boy though he is too late to prevent the murder of the girl. In the character of Kurella, Elisabeth Langgässer has attempted to show her ideal of a Catholic priest and outlined the task of the Church which does not consist in preaching, but in working practically among the suffering population, to regain its grip over youth and to lead them back to the right path. This task is the more difficult as the freedom of the individual must not be violated. People must come back to the Church by their own free will, all the Church can do is to stand in readiness to receive them. Even God's hands are bound by the freedom of His creation. He can only open before us the gates of life that lead into the abyss, to hybris and the void. But if we set our faith in Him we shall find that 'it is a cul-de-sac which opens when we reach the end of it.'

The characters of the first part—the actual expedition—are people harassed by the horrors of war and concentration camp. Like Gaiser's characters they are ill with hunger, physical, sexual and otherwise. They may be a demobilized soldier like Friedrich Am Ende, they may have been imprisoned during the Hitler régime like Irene, they may have hidden from their pursuers in a monastery like Frau Levi-Jeschower, they may have handed over their own relatives to the gas-chambers in their cowardice like Ewald. They are all hunted and hunter alike, the hind and Arthemis, fleeing from themselves and seeking themselves. They are typical post-war characters, restless, uncertain of their own position in the world. They are like the heroes of the Argos of ancient times of whom it is said in the book: 'Their goal was their starting point, their starting point flung them out into the world, like the hand of one throwing a lasso and drew them again towards itself. What had been their goal now became again their starting point and their starting point became their goal. The purpose of the pilgrimage is to descend into the Orcus and to retrieve the self from there.'

Elisabeth Langgässer thus reverses the story of Orpheus. Only by turning round can Orpheus save Eurydice.

Grace has descended on our pilgrims in the shape of memory. 'For Grace has always been Memory at the same time. Memoria as it was called by the ancients.' In each individual case this awakening is achieved by some trivial fact, but once the memory begins to work in them they are drawn irresistibly towards their goal. They seem to have met by chance, but in actual fact they are all linked together in some mysterious way. 'None of these people still possesses himself, each one of them seems to want himself and his life back from the other.' It is a ghostlike journey on which they set out chained together in their search of their own selves. Bound to their sins 'like Ulysses to the mast' they are driven along by the breath of fate ultimately to reach their 'golden fleece' and to understand that they would never have found it had it not allured them from afar.

The fate of the individual pilgrims reflects the fate of the whole nation. The German nation had sinned. It had committed the sin of pride, 'the common origin of all sins and their crown, the crown of the Babylonian whore who hands the nations the goblet of intoxication'. The war, the slaughter of the innocent, the collapse and the hunger that followed it is all but the reflection of this first catastrophe which can be described as 'fall of the angels or simply as the original sin'. The outcome is destruction and death, but to Elisabeth Langgässer Death is neither a goal nor the motive force of life. It is but 'a transitory state'. The German collapse does not mean the end of Germany, it is but a phase, a tapping of memory at the Germans' door to set out and to retrieve his soul from the Orcus. This can be achieved only in one way: through humility which is the salvation of mankind, its regeneration and cure, and last not least a joy. The recovery will be the speedier and more complete the more willing we lay our fate in the hands of God. 'Whom He (God) wants to save, He lets fall back into the state of a puppet. And the same applies also to the one through whom He intends the salvation to be achieved.'

In comparing the four books discussed we are struck by the deep impression the war and the collapse have made on the German people. A feeling of guilt is common to all four authors, but Elisabeth Langgässer is the only one who wants this guilt to be explicitly restricted to Germany. For Kassack this guilt is shared to a greater or lesser extent by the whole of Western Europe, Andres blames society as a whole, Gaiser man himself for letting the beast get the upper hand in him. All four authors look for a solution. Andres is the least successful since he does not expect a change unless there is a social revolution which he does not envisage. But whatever the attitude of the various writers is towards the postwar problems, they certainly do not ignore them, and the mere fact that the writers have the courage to face them is itself a first step towards a solution. To us these books are of value because the problem with which they deal are not merely problems that concern Germany, but as Kassack in particular pointed out, they regard the whole western world. Unless we are prepared to face them frankly and with an open mind our Western civilisation will slowly but irresistibly slither downhill.

W. NEUSCHAFER, PH.D.

DAISY FAY

'Perhaps Daisy never went in for amour at all'

And on her blue lawns guests
Among the heaven flowers grew
Enamoured of the negro music

While she sat white gowned
Below the flower tree and swung
A gallows song: as Gatsby said
That evening waiting in his car
Her voice was full of money

And yet undying on the air
Those trumpets death pale hung
All summer long.

RICHARD CODY

POEM

Some word spoke,
Some hidden voice vibrates where reason never speaks;
There is not one thing that matters now
Save my pen
And its rapid exudation.

In that moment some cord broke
One memoried spirit returning to its last abode
Transmuted by this fire of soul,
Yea—all the world shall know
How she looked—
And both the Moon and Venus shall cling again
Among the chestnut branches.

J. H. CROOK

ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE KIKUYU RESERVE (FROM A TRAVELLER'S POINT OF VIEW)

Over the glittering, rain-dazzled air, a rainbow hangs, lightly suspended from rolling cumuli. The rain stops pounding the earth into which moisture sinks as if it were blotting paper. The clouds tower many-surfaced, like a wall round the Kikuyu Reserve. In the distance, from the Mission, the Ngong hills rise clear again, like dark blue enamel, sculptured and hard. The Mission stands red-roofed upon a hill, its three bells intone continually from the church, whose interior many-pillared, many arched and of rose pink brick, is open to the air. This is where Mrs. Watson tried to penetrate the adamant of the Kikuyu with the Christian faith. The jacaranda avenues nearby are misted with purple bloom, the colour of the undersides of the sun-bleached clouds.

But let us leave the Schools and missions and wander in the paths among the bitter-sweet perfume of the wattle-trees, creamy mimosa-like flowers, among the banana and maize plantations. The earth is terra-cotta and powdery. A metallic-blue starling flashes past, a yellow bird sings like thrush. Three women come round a bend: they are dressed, Roman-fashion in long, toga-like garments, saffron and russet, showing up the brown velvet of their skins. Their bare feet stir up little clouds of dust, they laugh and talk softly in the liquid Kikuyu tongue. One can see, as they come nearer, that their hands are clapped on their heads, to help them carry their great loads of firewood, which bend them almost double. One bears a young child in the toga on her back. The lobes of her ears are pierced and pulled down to a grotesque length to hold two or three coloured rings the size of bracelets.

The Kikuyu woman do all the heavy work. As we go further we see others toiling in allotments—shambas as they are called. It is the woman who till the eroding land, and walk miles for firewood. The warrior-occupation of the men is taken from them: they have become, O Mutability!—houseboys, garden boys, servants of every description, Cambridge graduates, Ministers and many more just loafers. All sing at their work—We can hear the women as they pass into the distance behind us; their song has an exciting rhythm, complex and monotonous.

Now we come to a village. The huts are round, made of wattle and mud, and are whitewashed. The roofs are conical and roughly thatched, and look like mushrooms where they lie among the hills. A rich chief may have several, and put a wife in each, using a spare hut for a kitchen. Not many, however, have more than two wives as inheritance is divided and there are too many small boys pasturing the small sheep and pale oxen.

Inside one of the huts it is very dark, spiders crawl on the damp walls, but the floor and roof are dry. A small fire makes it smoky and it is difficult to distinguish the old man sitting on the floor. His spear is beside him and he is half asleep. He wears only the skin of a snow-leopard,

however, and as we enter he painfully rises to his feet, smiling, giving the Kikuyu greeting. We talk, each in our own language for a little while, comically enough. He grows excited, suddenly he goes outside and we follow, puzzled. Then he takes up a piece of earth in his knarled fingers and breaks it, almost ceremonially, as if it were holy bread, crumbling it to dust. He does this twice, trying to explain in his own language. Suddenly it becomes clear—the old cry—‘The Europeans have taken our land. In my father’s youth there was a famine, not long after Livingstone came. We went in search of food and after many years returned to our ancestral homes, to find them belonging to white strangers.’ Now one may travel in a train and hear another cry: ‘There! That was my grandfather’s land—there! You see? Where those buildings are, or that farm.’ Were the Fates unkind to these people, or is it a case of: ‘Except the seed fall into the ground and lie, it cannot live?’

The old man’s son comes in. He is a schoolmaster. He is also a Revivalist: not very tall, wearing shorts, although in his forties he keeps the appearance of youth, grace and vigour as do many of the Kikuyu. He is slender and well-shaped, his face has a touch of nobility. Greeting us in good English, he hears the melancholy look of an educated African to whom Christianity may well be the passport to death; yet at times his face shines with an interior splendour. It is obvious that he works hard; he studies late at night. Suddenly he is shaken by a long fit of coughing. He is a victim to the scourge that carries off many who study in similar conditions. He is an African Touchstone: ‘I care not for my spirits if my legs were not weary.’ Treatment has been offered to him—but he will not take it, his work needs him all the time. He had a school at Kiambu, now closed down, where twice he was beaten up for his refusal to take the Mau Mau Oath—yet twice he returned.

The sun is setting. We return to the typical Government house, corrugated roof, concrete floor, and to the garden like the Hanging Gardens of Solomon. The trill of the crickets peals out in the magical semitones; Pan is fingering his flute softly in the woods, which are pierced through by yellow spears of light, their long shadows strike the road, where the shepherd boys bring home their sheep and cattle, whose bells rings musically in the winding valleys. Over the Ngong hills the sky is lemon-bright and Venus trembles, a dew-drop on a flower-like trail of vapour. The rainbow still hangs, iridescent between two cliffs of shadowy cloud.

At Fort Hale voices have been raised in menacing tumult, bullets have splintered the earth among 2,000 prone bodies; while here hymns have echoed on the lucid air. There hands have been lifted, claw-like, to tear innocent men limb from limb, and bullets have been forced to rattle death in reply. Cries of hate and terror have shuddered among the hills while here psalms have died in calm upon the stately trade wind . . .

‘What is man that thou art mindful of him,
Or the son of man that thou visitest him?’

F. M.
The Kikuyu Reserve, Kenya.

FEBRUARY 14th 1951

O pink sugarloaf of hearts and robust ribbons;
cards that pour out the heart's care; creamy
phrases; speech for the dumb who ache for love's
loquacious art; still the second month spirit
spurs; the worn phrases cling.

So, the year growing old, and the steel rain
falling through the Asian sky, I send
a salutation, knowing my life's uneasiness, to greet
you on the day ordained
the February farce of joking time;

time, that old cripple, has deceived us;
has tapped his way through the dark
hall, and gone his shambling path unmarked by us
who live lonely yet not alone; driven
alien among cares; alone amidst crowds.

Yet, winter to spring, the old time revives,
the year's long absence is forgotten
and time's enemy hope comes to
heap his pyre: surely meeting is sweet again
and aureate spray from such happiness rise?

So on this day when the wild God is abroad
and tired words are worn on sleeve,
I also send my message to you of the Chalk down
and plaintive fen, telling the card's tale
Of hope, and you; and love and you.

P. J. KENT

WE WERE STRANGERS

A brief introduction to John Huston.

'Sometimes a writer provides the most significant contribution, but most frequently it is a film director.'

JEAN RENOIR

In the history of the film there have been more Defoes than one. Film fiction, although only graphic, appears to be as factual as new photography and therefore suits the storyteller interested in persons and events for their own sake even better than the realistic novel. Yet when John Huston deserved recognition as perhaps the only film maker of first class ability outside France who has tried consistently to preserve the objectivity, the anonymity of his camera English critics were writing (*Sequence 14*) to him: 'We like you but we should like to know you better.' And this is recently as January last when the latest and the best of his films, *The African Queen*, had just appeared in succession to: *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), *Key Largo* (1946), *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1947), *We Were Strangers* (1949), *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951).

There are not two better or more faithful realisations of very different kinds of fiction than the first and last of these films. Karel Reisz has already discussed Huston's excellent treatment of Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* fairly adequately in the essay *Substance into Shadow* (*Cinema* 1952). The last, *The Red Badge of Courage* is Stephen Crane's American battle song of a young Yankee's first experience of civil war. For his version (1) Huston styled his own moving photography as far as possible upon the official campaign pictures taken by Matthew Brady (2) and composed magnificent studies (almost exclusively close) of infantry in and between action, of their faces, vulnerable bodies, hands holding belongings, firearms, all against the sunlit woodland and pasture in which they fought at the Rappanhanock in Virginia.

For the reason that each of his subjects has similarly been allowed to dictate a style to him Huston's work is not so easily pigeonholed as say, Carol Reed's whose narrative remains magnificently uncompromisingly his own and whose subjects since *Odd Man Out* (1946), *The Fallen Idol* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949) and *The Outcast of the Islands* (1951),—invariably reflect ideas of good and evil from the writings of Graham Greene and Joseph Conrad. But in recreating certain chosen novels (3) as films Huston has shown himself no less consistent and certainly more versatile than Reed in bringing out pictorially what is best and most characteristic in them. Each has been an exciting more or less sympathetic but objective study in character and motive of a group of individuals engaged in some enterprise vital to them. Two at least have been motivated directly by human cupidity, its object having been what Dashiell Hammett sees as the age old jewelled falcon, Ben Traven as the treasure gold of the *Sierra Madre*. But none has propounded a moral opinion. And more often than not Huston himself seems to have breathed only the same troubled savourless air of the nineteen-thirties as Hemingway, Matraux and Steinbeck.

* * *

In 1933 a revolutionary organisation planned to assassinate the President and cabinet of Cuba by exploding a bomb at the funeral of a senator prominent in Havana; once a tunnel some hundred yards long had been dug from the cellar of a house outside the cemetery to his family tomb he was shot dead in the street. Huston's *We Were Strangers* is in essence a study of the six revolutionaries who volunteer to shut themselves in the vacant house of the one woman among them to dig the secret tunnel from its cellar to the tomb; the woman going daily to her work in a city bank and keeping house for the five men who work in shifts to fill bags with excavated earth which is collected and disposed of by two others dressed as dustmen, while out of doors the uneasy life of a police state capital goes on week after week.

In part the force of each of Huston's films issues from his acute sense of place; San Francisco in *The Maltese Falcon*, The Florida Coast in *Key Largo*, the Mexican desert in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, the American metropolis in *The Asphalt Jungle*, the Rappahannock battlefield in *The Red Badge of Courage*, a tropical river in *The African Queen*; scenes (4) all as carefully selected as are these of the Cuban city of Havana to localise the story of *We Were Strangers* so that its underground conspiracy, retold for what it may be worth from recent history, has at least the appearance of reality. One patently artificial sequence of the film composed by projecting scenes of students on the university steps of Havana behind the principal actress playing in a studio no more than testifies to Huston's determination to present his story as a good director should as graphically as possible. Always he communicates it not so much by what his soundtrack records as by what his camera sees.

When the tunnellers during long days and nights have spent their first high hope and energy they enter the subsoil of the overcrowded poor persons' quarter of the graveyard. 'From now on it will be a nightmare'. Not so much the leader's words or the musical score as Huston's photographic compositions themselves convey the hideousness of this passage. His camera crowds in upon masked faces, slow moving sweating bodies and the oily earth walls around them, half glimpses half avoids the bags of rubble which are dragged away by the two silent disposal men.

With this critical phase of the tunnelling coincides the mental collapse of the intellectual conspirator who has known since boyhood the senator marked down for assassination. Fearing the necessity which his breakdown puts upon his comrades of silencing him he wanders distraught into the street where quite fortuitously a passing truck kills him. This sudden threat to the safe secrecy of the enterprise expires sooner than that of the counter revolutionary who from time to time appears at the woman's place of work and house, half suspicious half in amorous pursuit of her.

While doubt of their ability afterwards to justify a multiple murder of politically innocent as well as guilty people further unceases the revolutionaries, Huston's shrews surveillance (without ever involving him in personal judgement) keeps us aware of intimacies and moral responsibilities in growth among them. But however long and revealingly he dwelt upon their suspenseful situation he could never discover in it the variety of sentiment, scene and incident expected of his film. The episode itself

belongs as usual to another man's novel, *Rough Sketch* by Robert Sylvester, and has been rewritten for filming not by the director alone but in collaboration with a Peter Viertel. Together they have attempted to diversify it by implying rather than creating its connection with the overthrow of the Cuban government (which was achieved quite independently of the six conspirators in 1933) and have failed to conceive the well knit and economical narrative we expect of Huston, by himself a practised scenarist. By prefacing the film with a paragraph about oppressive government and beginning it with scenes of the state legislature making meetings of more than four persons treasonable and then of revolutionary leaflet distribution for which a student is the next morning shot down before his sister's eyes, Huston and Viertel obviously mean to motivate participation, particularly the woman's in the conspiracy. But they might as well have begun the film with the last brief exchange between brother and sister before his murder on the university steps because it adequately implies all that the many foregoing words and scenes have stated of the general provocation to plot against the government(5).

When the tunnel to his family tomb has been completed and the senator murdered, the plot's sudden frustration makes it by itself an insufficient story with no climax but an anticlimax. No news of revolutionary progress outside has reached the conspirators during their incarceration; not even the 'bomb man' who arrives to prepare the dynamite for exploding at the end of the tunnel and lets drop that the senator's funeral is after all to be held elsewhere helps us to anticipate the fall of the government by other means than assassination. By this time the counter revolutionary has evidence of the woman's complicity; she is followed to the home which all the conspirators save the leader have already left in bitter disappointment.

Although too shrewd to do otherwise than reserve his opinion on the moral rights and wrongs of the conflicts he films (the film being essentially an objective medium) Huston frequently for graphic effect confines himself to the point of view of one party: of the private investigator in *The Maltese Falcon*, of the bank robbers in *The Asphalt Jungle*, or of the desperate defenders of the house in *We Were Strangers*. The man and the woman fight off her police pursuers Hemingway fashion by the flare of submachine-gun fire and exploding dynamite until he is wounded to death. Feeling as profoundly as anyone for his cause, for his friends and for himself he yet does according to contemporary code by not saying so. Sound of jubilation in the city tells him that the revolution has been realised for which he has given his life but to which neither his conspiracy nor his death have made effective contribution.

It is now after the sudden burst of active violence around the house that Huston introduces striking pseudo-Russian but strictly inconsequent scene of popular revolt in the city, providing not only an extension of climax but also a cue for the woman's speech over the dead hero.

O how soon will responsible writers of American fiction admit that once a hero dies he is dead! It must have been Steinbeck who for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (6) received the refrain from *John Brown's Body*; it remains current in the film scenario he has written about the Mexican

rebel Zapata. Even the heroine of *We Were Strangers* is shown joining the chorus—a superfluity of speech and scene unusual in Huston's films—until his camera leaves her for the returning docker whose calypsos have brightened moments of abortive conspiracy. His ironical sentimental verse sung to the syncopated twang of a guitar, impromptu over the hero's body sounds the only dying fall perfectly appropriate to the film:

'In nineteen hundred and thirty three
Tony Fenner died for me.
Now I have one brother less
But I have my liberty.'

The 'group of individuals engaged in some enterprise vital to them' whose characters and motives, growing intimacy and awareness of moral responsibility Huston has most recently studied numbers only two: the Georgian spinster and the riverboatman, she bereft of her missionary brother by German brutality, he befuddled by loneliness and gin, who together navigate a well-nigh unnavigable African river in order revengefully to reach and sink the only German gunboat on Lake Victoria and who on their way conceive between them not so much a romantic love as a mutual compassion.

Only upon sight of this characteristically faithful version perhaps does C.S. Forester's old adventure novel seem suited to Huston's taste and talent. Certainly the only recent work of fiction with which his film readily compares is the incomparable *Old Man*, William Faulkner's story of a man and a woman, convict and mother, adrift upon a Mississippi flood. Appraising not merely the heroism and the pathos but primarily the profound comedy (not as in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* desirability) of human behaviour, Huston like Faulkner has interpreted a simple story with the generosity of mind of a myth maker.

And his technical ability has inevitably kept pace with his not unsuspected but progressive humanism. In colour for the first time he has photographed his best film and probably his best single sequence: the slow silent climatic sequence closing in the bottom of the boat hopelessly stranded in a waste of reeds where the woman has composed herself for prayer over the exhausted body of the man. As always no word, only the unforgettable vision itself holds Huston's meaning.

RICHARD CODY

(1) Having read Crane's story, one wonders which passages Gavin Lambert so resented having been cut from Huston's version that he virtually refused to review it in *Sight and Sound*. Nevertheless his case against Huston's producers (MGM) has now been taken up by Lilian Ross, the *New Yorker's* controversialist.

(2) *Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man*: a splendid album of Brady's life and work has been presented to the Edward Turner Sims by the American Library.

(3) The exception among Huston's films is *Key Largo*: a version of a play by Maxwell Anderson to which the bloody climax of Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* is adapted and appended. One regrets that not Huston but first Howard Hawks and then Michael Curtis should have undertaken to film Hemingway's novel completely.

(4) Directors so rarely use exterior photography to full advantage. Joseph Mankiewicz, for example merely snapshot Ankara for his version of *Operation Cicero*. He seems rather to *forehear* than to visualise the films he prepares for his own direction—*A Letter to Three Wives*, *All About Eve*, *People Will Talk*.

(5) Of documentary evidence: e.g. '*curieuses évènements d'* Havane'. Nouvelle Revue Française Vol. XLI (1933).

- (6) p. 385. Ma said: 'How'm I gonna know 'bout you? They might kill ya an' I wouldn' know. How'm I gonna know?' Tom laughed uneasily. 'Well, maybe like Casey says, a fella ain't got a soul of his own, but on'y a piece of a big one—an' then—'
'Then what, Tom?'
'Then it don't matter. Then I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever'where—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. If Casey know'd, why. I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad . . .

MONCKTON MILNES

The Life of Richard Monckton Milnes, by James Pope Hennessy, 2 vols., Constable 25/- each.

John Buchan said that a great man lays upon posterity the duty of understanding him. To no less an extent do other men, not great yet important, impose this duty on their descendants. And in the case of Richard Monckton Milnes (1809-1885), later Lord Houghton, the duty seems to have been as a great a pleasure to his biographer as it is to the reader of these detailed, rich books.

Milnes, like Peel and Gladstone, came from one of those wealthy, upper middle class families whose prosperity was firmly secured in the expanding trade of the country and in the land itself. At Cambridge he was an Apostle, the friend of Tennyson and Hallam. After extensive travelling on the continent, he entered Parliament in 1837 at a time when he was considered by Walter Savage Landor 'the greatest poet now living in England'. Like Disraeli, he was bitterly disappointed at not receiving office from Peel in 1841; unlike Disraeli he became a Palmerstonian Whig after the Corn Laws crisis. He was known in all the capitals of Europe, and in London and Yorkshire, as the host at glittering breakfast and dinner parties for the literary and political élite. He never gained political office; nor, after the Crimean War, did he achieve importance as a poet. Realising his limitations, he turned to the encouragement of younger poets, such as Swinburne and David Gray. Made a baron in 1863, until his death he continued the 'drudgery divine' of the political and social round.

Decidedly he was not great. He did not achieve the eminence, even the greatness, of some of his immediate contemporaries, Tennyson, Gladstone and Disraeli. Mr. Pope Hennessy shows the reason for his failure: it lay in 'the conflict between his political pretensions and his literary temperament, which was to confuse, indeed to mar, the whole of his adult career.' Disraeli, nominally Milnes' friend, successfully welded together a literary

and political existence and, as he said, got to the top of the 'greasy pole,' the premiership. Disraeli, however, had a Macchiavellian twist to his character which Milnes, more warm-hearted and emotional, lacked.

Monckton Milnes knew practically everybody of note. His life touched so many others that these books are a microcosm of the upper reaches of Victorian society. A complete list of his friends would be too long, but among them were Lady Blessington, Count d'Orsay and others of their circle; Guizot and Princess Lieven; George Sand, Alexis de Tocqueville, Montalembert, Thiers, Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III; the Carlyles, the Brownings, Kinglake; Swinburne, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot. Once he had made a friend it was for life and when distance divided, letters kept them in touch. Milnes was a great talker: indeed considering this, his wide circle of friends is surprising. His wit was almost as famed in his own day as that of Sidney Smith earlier in the century. That he kept so many friends is an indication of his compassionate, sentimental and loyal nature.

Mr. Pope-Hennessy has written a perfect biography. His style and personality are subordinate to those of Monckton Milnes, who is amply quoted in verse and prose. The result is that Milnes emerges full square as a person, not a paste-board figure. The less pleasant sides of his character are as fully examined as the pleasant: his love of erotica, his intense interest in flagellation and crime—it was he who took Thackeray to see an execution—his occasional pomposity. The biography is eminently fair, Milnes is related to his Victorian background and to his contemporaries by ample quotations—the result of Mr. Pope-Hennessy's wide reading.

The volumes are full of interesting passages, this for instance, on University life in the 1820's:

'A feature of Trinity life . . . was the detested chapel system, by which every undergraduate in the college had to be in chapel at seven o'clock in the morning. This measure, largely a disciplinary one to ensure that self-indulgent young men got up at a proper hour, was the subject of many complaints and petitions, one of which Milnes drafted while still among the youngest of the freshmen. Chapel was theoretically followed by attendance at lectures from eight until ten, reading from ten till two, relaxation such as calling on a friend or wandering to glance over the prints at Leighton's bookshop before dinner at three o'clock, Vespers, tea and work bringing to a close his ideal day. This strict curriculum was not adhered to by everyone.'

Or this conversation about Gladstone which one may commend to admirers of Disraeli:

The Speaker: 'Gladstone from his Puritanism cannot understand a great deal of men and things.'

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M.W.M.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

- David Stafford-Clark '*Psychiatry To-day*' (Pelican, 2s. 6d.).
*Ralph Hill '*The Concerto*' (Pelican, 3s. 6d.).
Thomas a Kempis '*Imitation of Christ*', translated by Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin, 2s. 6d.).
* Dylan Thomas '*Collected Poems*' (Dent, 12s. 6d.).
* To be reviewed in the summer issue.

The Editor acknowledges the receipt of the following magazines:
The European Students' Mirror.
Magazine of the Southampton Girls' Grammar School.
Arrows (The University of Sheffield).
 π (Pie) (University College, London).
The Gongster (The University of Nottingham).
World Student News.
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